

THE HOME OF SHAKSPERE.

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FROM the house where Shakspere was born to the place where he obtained his "small Latin and

less Greek," is but a short distance. The *Grammar School*, of which the following engraving is



an exterior view, is situated in the High Street, beside the Chapel of the Guild, or of the Holy Cross, a good specimen of the ecclesiastical architecture of the reign of Henry VII. In this chapel, at one time, the school was held, and hero Shak-

spere may have imbibed some portion of his learning. The foundation of the Grammar School took place in the reign of Edward IV.

The Latin school-room, delineated below, is situated over the old Guildhall. It is a perfectly



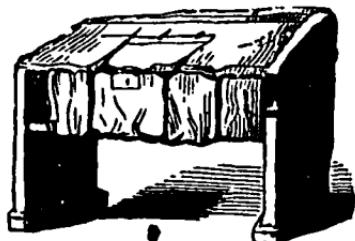
plain room, with a low plaster ceiling; but from the massive beams at the sides of the room, and

those above the modern plaster, to which the struts from the side beams form a support, as



well as from the external appearance of the deeply-pitched roof, there can be little doubt that an open timber roof originally decorated this apartment.

The Mathematical school-room beside it—represented in the lower engraving on the preceding page—has a flat roof, crossed by two beams of the Tudor era; and in the centre of the roof, where they meet each other, is a circular ornament or boss. The school has been recently repaired, and it has entirely lost its look of antiquity. A few years ago there were many very old desks and forms there, and one among them was termed Shakspere's desk. We engrave a representation of it. The tradition which as-



signed it to Shakspere may be very questionable; its being the oldest and in the worst condition may have been the reason for such an appropriation. The boys of the school very generally carried away some portion of it as a memento, and the relic-hunters frequently behaved as boyishly, so that a great portion of the old wood has been abstracted.

The court-yard of the school presented many features of interest, but the hand of modern "improvement" has swept them away. On a visit to Stratford eight years ago, the author obtained the following sketch. The schools were at that time approached by an antique external stair, roofed with tile, and up which the boys had ascended from the time of Shakspere. This characteristic feature has passed away; its only record is the cut given below. The court-yard has been subdivided and walled, and the original character of this portion of the building has departed forever.

For the mementos of Shakspere's later life, we must look in the neighborhood of Stratford. Tradition assigns adventures and visits to many



places in its vicinity, but the most important locality with which his name is connected, is the Park of Sir Thomas Lucy, at Charlecote.

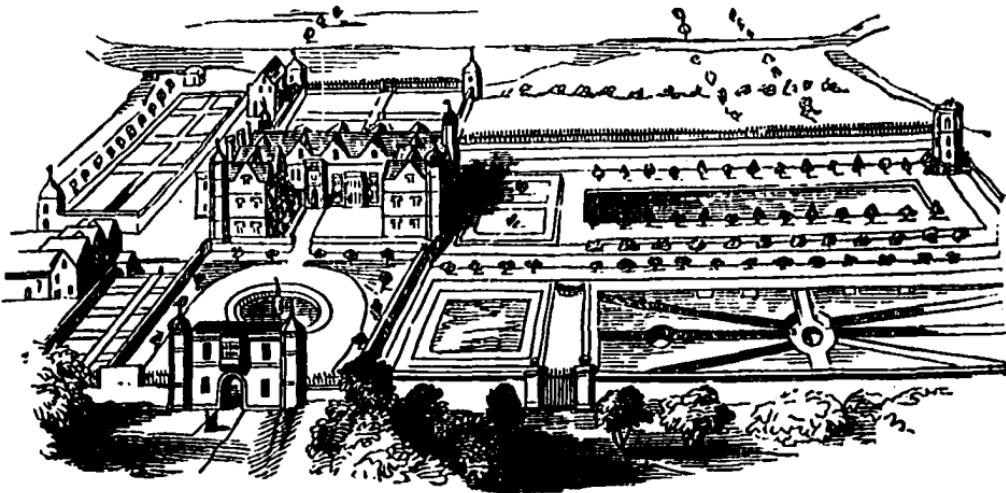
This was the scene of his deer-stealing adventures, which led, says tradition, to his quarrel with Sir Thomas, to a lampoon by the poet, which occasioned him to leave Stratford for London in greater haste than he wished, and produced his connection with the theatres. Of these tales we must speak farther on. But first let us say a few words on this ancient mansion.

Dugdale has given the history of Charlecote and its lords with much minuteness. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, and its old Saxon name, *Cearlcote*—the home of the husbandman—carries us back to years before the Conquest. The present house was built in 1558 by Thomas

Lucy, who in 1593 was knighted by Queen Elizabeth. It stands at a short distance from, and at some little elevation above, the river Avon. The building forms three sides of a quadrangle, the fourth being occupied by a handsome central gate-house, some distance in advance of the main building. The octangular turrets on each side, and the oriel window over the gate, are peculiar and pleasing features. The house retains its gables and angular towers, but has suffered from the introduction of the large and heavy sash-windows of the time of William III. or George I. In Thomas's edition of Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, published in 1730, there is an interesting "East prospect of Charlecote," drawn by H. Beighton in 1722, which gives a curious bird's eye view of the entire house and

gardens in their original state—that is, in the state in which Shakspere would see them. A

reduced copy of this view is here given. There is another view, showing the back of the house



from the river, preserved in the hall, and which appears to have been painted about the reign of James II. It shows the building to have been at that time precisely in the same condition; and as all modernization has affected the interior principally, the exterior aspect is now much the same as it was in the days of the poet.

Passing through the old gate, we enter the court-yard, which, in place of the old fountain and circular tank of water, is now laid out in flower-beds. The hall is entered by a porch, having the family arms and crest at each angle. We give below a view of the interior as it is now. It has undergone alterations since Washington Irving thus described it in his *Sketch Book*—“The ceiling is arched and lofty; and at one end is a gallery, in which stands an organ. The weapons and trophies of the chase, which formerly adorned the hall of a country gentleman, have made



way for family portraits. There is a wide hospitable fire-place, calculated for an ample old-fashioned wood-fire, formerly the rallying place of winter festivity. On the opposite side of the hall is the huge Gothic bow-window with stone shafts, which looks out upon the court-yard. Here are emblazoned, in stained glass, the armorial bearings of the Lucy family for many generations, some being dated in 1558. I was delighted to observe in the quarterings the three white luces, by which the character of Sir Thomas was first identified with that of Justico Shallow."

The seal
of Sir Tho-
mas Lucy,
here en-
graved, ex-
hibits the
three white
lukes inter-
laced.

The autograph is written in a bold hand. Our cut is reduced to one-half the size of the original. The document from which it is obtained is in the possession of Mr. Wheeler, of Stratford-on-Avon, and is appended to the presentation of the Rev. Richard Hill to the Rectory of Hampton Lucy, in the gift of Sir Thomas, and is dated October 8th, 1586. Upon the vanes of the house at

Charlecote, the three luces interlaced between cross crosslets are also displayed. An engraving of one of these vanes may be seen in Moule's



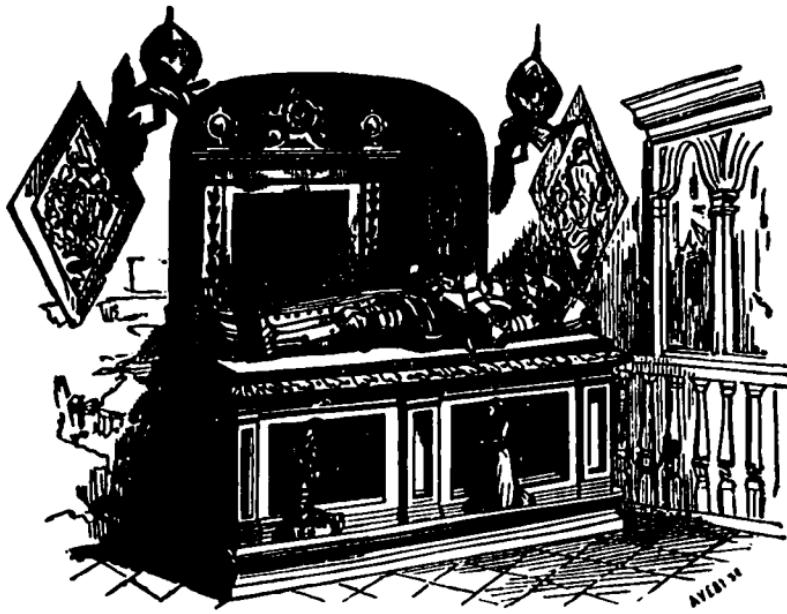
Heraldry of Fish, p. 55, who says—"The pike of the fisherman is the *luce* of heraldry, a name derived from the old French language *lus*, or from the Latin *lucius*: as a charge, it was very early used by heralds as a pun upon the name of Lucy."

The deer-stealing story, unlike a matter of fact, has grown to be more defined and clear the nearer it approaches our own time. It first commences by traditional stories loosely put down and exceedingly inaccurate in detail. Mention is made of a lost ballad satirizing Sir Thomas. By and by a stanza is found, and ultimately we get the entire ballad, about as scurrilous and worthless a composition as ever forger fixed on a great man. Shakspere may have stolen a deer, and Sir Thomas may have treated the matter a little more seriously than was generally the wont with those who only judged of others' property; but the vindictiveness and ill-feeling of the whole story are



the invention of more modern times. Sir Thomas appears to have been an exemplary country gentleman. He died Aug. 18, 1600, and is buried in Charlecote Church, a view of which is given

at the bottom of the preceding page. His effigy and that of his wife are sculptured there, as represented in the engraving below. They are executed in a masterly manner, and may be con-



sidered as careful portraits. That of the knight has been given by Ireland, but his copy has no resemblance to the original. The cut we have just given is a more careful copy of a finer head than any Justice Shallow could show. That Sir

Thomas had an equally fine heart, the epitaph on the black slab in the recess at the back of his tomb will show. His wife's virtues are recorded on it in a very touching and beautiful inscription.

(To be continued.)